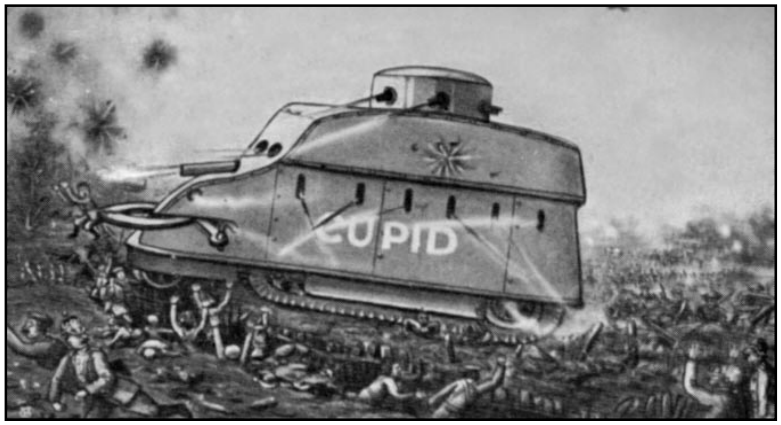
From the 1916 Fighting Vehicle Concepts Department:



Contemporary "artist's conception" of the world's newest weapon, the tank. Note the personnel claw for situations when ROE prohibits use of deadly force.

-- July-August 1986

What were we thinking?

A Collection of "Interesting" Ideas from ARMOR Magazine

We remember futurists like H. G. Wells, whose turn-of-the-century novels predicted rockets traveling to the moon and submarines 20,000 leagues under the sea, but we conveniently forget the predictions that didn't quite work out. Alas, *ARMOR* carried its share of them over the years, As we muddle into a new millennium, perhaps it's time to look back in the spirit of humility and explore some of the more humorous ideas. Remember, you never know, the future could still bring the world's first, "solar-powered, flying submarine-tank, fully equipped with a 60-ton phonograph transmitter and personnel sniffer."

From the 60-ton Phonograph Department:

This experimental vehicle allegedly provides a "listening" capability for the tank company. According to the "designer," it can also be utilized in the anti-personnel role and has been known to spit huge balls of fire.

-- November-December 1973

From the 1986 Fighting Vehicle Concepts Department:

"Ideally, what is needed is an 'Armored Individual Vehicle' (AIV).... This will be a small wheeled vehicle, probably with a set of six hydrostatically-powered wheels. *However, to enable this vehicle to be a true cross-country vehicle, it will be equipped with two or three pairs of legs.* [Italics added] While this sounds like something out of 'Star Wars,' we suggest that this is not a new idea, but was originally tried back in the fifties, but proved to be somewhat uncontrollable. The main reason for the problems encountered at that time was very simple: it takes about two years to learn to walk, using only two legs. The human operator, using mechanicals controls and with practically no feedback, had no chance of mastering those mechanical legs and the project was dropped. With the emergence of computers and microprocessors as powerful tools, the idea was revived and there are now several experimental vehicles using this kind of locomotion."

-- November-December 1986

From the Weapons Procurement Department:

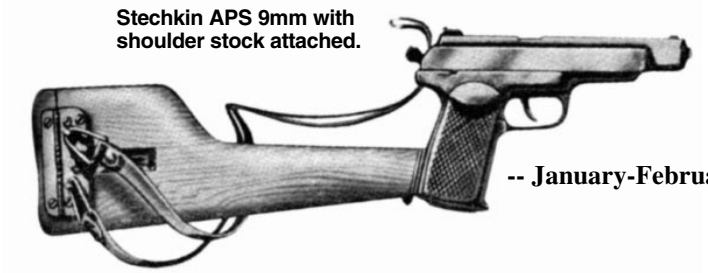
FUTURE TANK REQUIREMENT

We know exactly what we want. Take the single item of the tank: our requirements are simple. We want a fast, highly mobile, fully armored, lightweight vehicle. It must be able to swim, cross any terrain, and climb 30-degree hills. It must be air-transportable. It must have a simple but powerful engine, requiring little or no maintenance. The operating range should be several hundred miles. We would also like it to be invisible.

General Bruce C. Clarke
-- September-October 1960

From the M16 Replacement Department:

Stechkin APS 9mm with shoulder stock attached.



-- January-February 1966

From the Bad Headlines Department:

When an atomic weapon hits your battalion,
round up the men who can still function.
Take tactical action. Sympathize with your medics.
It is time for worry and for action, but it is

No Time for Despair!

--May-June 1956

From the Town and Country Department:

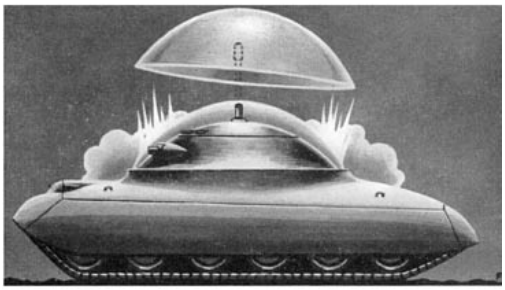
The M48 can move with gracious deliberation through any society.

-- January-February 1967

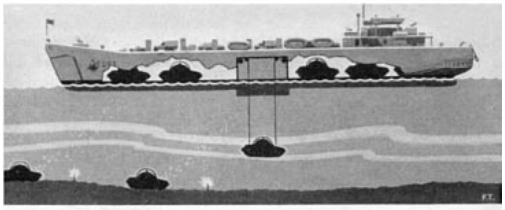
From the Ideas for the Marines Department:

UNDERSEA TANK

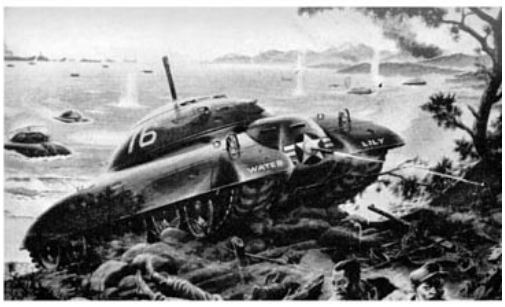
Technical engineers have designed an undersea tank of the future for amphibious operations. Still in the blueprint state, it is designed to overcome underwater obstacles and carry the punch against shore strong points in the critical initial phases of a landing. The illustrations below are from *Mechanix Illustrated Magazine,* and show the steps in landing the tank from the point offshore to arrival at beach.



The underwater tank blows off its plastic bubble top on reaching land.



Unloading offshore for the underwater approach, a submarine on tracks.



Arms are 105mm recoilless, flame thrower and machine guns, turret mounted.

-- January-February 1951

From the "I'd Rather Be Fishing" Department:

NEW TRIPLE THREAT VEHICLE

Lockheed's TerraStar amphibious vehicle is shown following successful mud, water, and hard surface operation tests. Developed by Lockheed Aircraft Service Company, TerraStar's outstanding feature is its capability to perform well in all three of these principal environments. An advanced locomotion concept permits TerraStar to move easily through mud and swampland, paddle through water, and operate as a conventional wheeled vehicle on roads and other hard surfaces. Commercial applications include oil and mineral exploration, remote site construction, rescue and salvage operations, mapping and survey work, and fire-fighting operations.

-- May-June 1967

From the"War in 1974" Predictions Department:

(Drawing by Lieutenant Colonel Rigg)

The Sky-Cavalrymen can be saved by their emergency rocket-ejected parachutes that lower them to safety from their flying platforms and aerial assault jeeps.

-- May-June 1958

From the Italian Confidence Course Department:

This Bersagliere somersaulting through a ring of fire shows the result of rigorous training and self-confidence.

-- March-April 1961

In an advanced stage of training, a Bersagliere trooper leaps to a somersault over the bare bayoneted rifles.

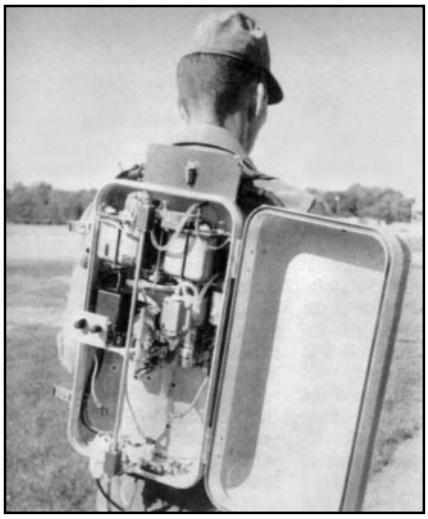
From the "Kill Me" Platform Department:

-- May-June 1958

This is the Army's experimental one-man helicopter, known as the Aerocycle.

From the Soldier Sniffer Department:

Front view of the Man Pack Prototype Chemical Personnel Detector with M16 Rifle.



Internal view of the Man Pack Personnel Detector revealing the simplicity of design.

-- September-October 1966

More from the Bad Headlines Department:

When in Doubt — Fire!!!

-- March-April 1988

From the Advice I Want To Hear Department:

"The first and most obvious countermeasure [to sleep deprivation] is napping. Soldiers should take naps at every opportunity... *Leaders must nap, setting the example for their troops.* Keep in mind that individuals need more sleep if they get it by napping than if the sleep is uninterrupted."

-- September-October 1994

From the Night Operations Department:

The Sun-Powered Helmet Radio.

-- July-August 1957

Finally, from the Fixin' What Ain't Broke Department:

"The purpose of this article is to discuss the way we shoot. Don't get me wrong — I believe in fire commands wholeheartedly. I just don't think we are using the right ones...

Let's start with the alert. Why say, GUNNER!?

I don't know. Why not say, TANK!? That will get my attention real quickly and it combines the alert and description elements all in one.

The next element is ammunition. Once again, why? Let's scrap it....

ON THE WAY would be replaced with FIRE!, because it is quicker and not as difficult for soldiers whose native language is not English.

A standard fire command would now sound like this:

Commander: TANK!

Gunner: OK!

Loader: UP!

Commander: FIRE!

Gunner: FIRING!

....To sum up, I believe that we need to drastically change the way we shoot. To continue doing it the way we are because we have always done it this way is not a viable reason. Tanks work differently and more quickly now. With the UCOFT, our crews are getting much faster and need a usable system like I have outlined here.

I'm not asking for permission to use abbreviated fire commands more often. I am recommending a new system, a quantum leap in efficiency. All it will take is for the Chief of Armor to read this article and say to the Weapons Department, "You know, this sergeant is right. Let's shorten up our fire commands and quit this Stone Age gunnery. I want this to be in effect in one year." Then we will quit this longwinded gunnery and have fire commands that keep up with the most sophisticated fire control system our Army has ever had."

-- May-June 1988

The preceding photomontage was compiled by 2LTs Jackson Eaton, William DelBagno, and Scott Hausauer, graduates of Princeton University, West Point, and Buffalo State College of New York, respectively.